
 <div>Frederick Theodore Frelinghuysen - US Secretary of State 1881-1885</div>	 <div>Lew Wallace U.S. Minister to the Ottoman Empire in Constantinople - 1881 to 1885</div>
Messrs. Aseher & Weinberg to Mr. Wallace. Constantinople , June 6, 1882.	
Your Excellency:	
We, the undersigned delegates of the central committee of Jewish emigration in Roumania, representing forty-nine local committees, beg to approach your excellency for the purpose of craving your assistance and support in behalf of our oppressed coreligionists who are suffering under legal disabilities in the kingdom of Roumania, which render it impossible for them any longer to find means of subsistence in that country, where many thousands are reduced to starvation.	
Sufficient funds have been subscribed by the Jewish committees in Roumania to enable many colonies to be formed in the dominions of His Majesty, and we would crave your excellency kindly to procure permission and liberty for our coreligionists to settle in any of the Mutessarafliks of Syria wherever there are available localities.	
The points which we desire to know are, viz:	
Whether Jews on becoming Turkish subjects will be permitted to settle in the waste lands of the Vilayet of Syria, excluding the Pashalik of Palestine free of charge in groups of not more than five hundred families, and whether they will also be permitted to purchase lands and settle on them in agricultural communities.	
2d. Whether, if so, they will be exempt from taxation for the next five years.	
3d. Whether they will be permitted to construct roads to the nearest large town or seaport.	
Some of these societies are wealthy, possessing in some instances a considerable capital, and their members are possessed by no other desire but that of developing the resources of the country and occupying themselves as peaceable citizens.	
While only especially representing our Roumanian coreligionists, we would also venture to remind your excellency that owing to the daily recurrence of prosecution and disasters of the most fearful description our brethren in Russia are living in a state of panic-stricken suspense. In many instances they have realized all their worldly goods and abandoned their occupation, not anticipating any check to their desire to emigrate into Turkey, and are now rapidly consuming the capital with which they had hoped to start in their new home.	
The matter has become one of the most serious and urgent necessities. Hundreds of thousands of people are awaiting with the utmost anxiety information upon which they can safely act, and your excellency and the great and the philanthropic nation which you represent would be performing an act of the highest benevolence and charity if, owing to your kind intervention in their behalf, they may be relieved from their present dread and extremity, and leave countries in which they have nothing but ill-treatment to anticipate, for one where the experience of their coreligionists has proved they may expect peace and protection, and where they would thankfully become loyal and patriotic subjects of His Magnanimous Majesty the Sultan.	
M. ASCHER - President of the committee for Bucharest Jewish emigration.	
MOYER WEINBERG - Founder and member of the committee in the Kingdom of Roumania.	
Mr. Wallace to Mr. Frelinghuysen. Legation of the United States, Constantinople, July 11, 1882	
Sir:	
Through Mr. L. Oliphant I had an account of the Jewish exodus from Russia, and of the misery the refugees were undergoing in the towns north of this. Some of them having reached Constantinople, were starving in the streets. My sympathy was naturally excited in their behalf.	
On the 6th of June last two gentlemen were brought to the legation, and upon introduction presented a paper, of which a copy is inclosed. You will perceive that it is a petition craving assistance for their coreligionists in the Kingdom of Roumania; that the subscribers represent themselves as delegates acting for forty-nine local committees in their country; and that the point they wished to gain, through my services unofficially rendered, was the privilege of colonizing in such districts of Syria as contained localities available for the purpose. They seemed respectable men and very much in earnest. Mr. Oliphant was personally acquainted with them, and he recommended them to be what they seemed. The interview resulted in my telegraphing for permission to give them and their people my good offices in obtaining for them, if possible, permission to colonize themselves in Turkey.	
Mr. Oliphant and a Mr. Alexander, both respectable gentlemen, were the agents of the movement in Constantinople. They met me, by my invitation, at the legation. A discussion of the best mode of procedure was had, and an agreement reached. I was to visit the Porte and use my best efforts to get the privilege sought; having obtained it, my connection with the business was to end; they were to manage the immigration and the settlement of the colonists."	
Agreeably to this arrangement, I visited the minister of foreign affairs, who informed me that the matter had been before His Majesty's council of ministers, which had decided affirmatively that the Jews from whatever parts could come and settle in Turkey; that there was a general law of immigration in force which must be taken for the guidance of such as chose to come; that they could come when they pleased, and would be settled in groups of two hundred or two hundred and fifty families, that they could settle on any unoccupied lands in Mesopotamia, about Aleppo, or in the regions of the Orontes River; that they could not establish themselves in Palestine; that the firman of the Sultan was unnecessary, for, having once approved the law, he could not be called on to do so again; that every colonist was simply bound to become an Ottoman subject.	
This, you will readily see, covered all my part of the business. The refugees could come immediately; the lands at their service were good; the law was liberal and encouraging; if they behaved themselves they would do well. I made report to Messrs. Oliphant and Alexander and discharged myself from the connection.	
A little later, when the affair had an appearance of taking on extraordinary proportions, possibilities of trouble to the immigrants presented themselves, and I thought it safer to have the worthy minister of foreign affairs put his replies to me in writing. With that view, I addressed him a note, of which a copy is inclosed. In an interview, the undersecretary (Mr. Artin Effendi) assured me that as the immigration would be under the law, no further assurances were necessary; and as that seemed reasonable, I was satisfied, and did not press an answer to my communication. I make an inclosure of the note because it sets out the minister's replies on nearer approach to exactitude.	
For your more perfect understanding of the scheme as it now stands, and to enable you to answer questions upon the subject, should such be addressed to you, I take the liberty of making an inclosure of a copy of the Turkish law of immigration (translated).	
In conclusion, there is nothing to prevent all the Israelites on the earth from settling in Asiatic Turkey. They shall not settle in Palestine - that is the only prohibition.	
I have, &c.,	
LEW. WALLACE.	
https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1882/d384	